

Provincial Problems



By **SPEECH**
HON. A. G. MACKAY

Delivered in the Debate on the Address

January 27th, 1911



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Mr. Speaker,—It is fitting that the opening sentences of the speech of the Lieutenant-Governor, which was placed in his hands by his constitutional advisers, should contain a reference to the demise of King Edward VII. and to the far reaching influence for good which he exerted throughout his whole reign. No British subject knows, no British subject will ever know, how great was the influence exercised by our late King, making for the peace of the whole world. His very extended ties of affinity and consanguinity were doubtless used to advantage with all other European monarchs. His was a reign that made for peace, that tended to bring about if not the age itself, at least the spirit of the age, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; and when the nations of the earth shall have learned to submit international difficulties not to the arbitrament of the sword, but to the decision of such tribunals as that of The Hague, which recently has done such splendid work and has removed

forever as between us and the great nation to the south of us, a large number of irritating and mischief-making difficulties. That reminds me, Sir, that we are nearing the celebration of the century mark of peace between this nation and our cousins to the South; a celebration in which I have no doubt this province and this Dominion will take a fitting and prominent part. Notwithstanding the exasperating recollections of the War of 1812, Canada and the United States have set the world an excellent example of how two nations with a 3,000-mile non-fortressed and ungarrisoned frontier may live at peace as neighbor nations ought to.

LACK OF CONTENT AND INTENT

Coming to that portion of the speech which views the past Administration and the expected legislation of the present Government I may be permitted to remark, Sir, that the most noticeable feature of the whole speech is its absolute lack of content and particularly of intent on the part of the Government.

PRISON LABOR

With reference to the question of prison labor, while there has no doubt been a great deal of laudable work done in the way of employing prisoners, yet, Sir, I would like to suggest to the Honorable, the Provincial Secretary, the idea of considering carefully not only those whose liberty is restrained and who are confined in our public institutions, but also those who were prior to their incarceration dependent upon them and who possibly suffer more through their confinement than the actual prisoners. Some scheme might be devised which would not only encourage thrift and honesty on the part of those confined, but would also serve to alleviate the suffering of those who formerly depended upon them—if a part at least of the earnings of these prisoners could be sent back to their families.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The next paragraph of the speech deals with a very important question which I regret to say is touched very gingerly, and uncertainly—that of technical and industrial education. The reference to this very important subject is as follows:

“The necessity for and the advantages arising out of the adoption of a system of technical and industrial education are becoming more obvious day by day, and you will be asked to make an appropriation for this purpose.”

This indeed is handling an extremely important subject in a very non-committal manner. One would gather from this vague reference to the subject that the gray dawn of intelligence is at last striking the Government. With reference to this all-important question, contrast this vague, indefinite, ill-defined and non-committal position, Sir, with the stand taken by this side if the House last year. We, Sir, divided the House upon this same question last session. The record appears at p.246 of the Votes and Proceedings. Our motion was as follows: “That in the opinion of this House the province and the municipalities should unite in (a) the establishment of technical schools in the towns and cities in Ontario to supplement the practical

training of the workshop. (b) An arrangement as to the basis of support for such schools as between the province, the municipality and the interested manufactures. (c) The establishment in larger industrial centres of technical high schools. (d) that the powers of the municipalities should be enlarged so as to enable them to aid in the support of such work.

This, Sir, was a well-defined scheme, and, had the Government accepted it and appointed a commission to make the necessary inquiry and obtain the necessary information, something practical might be the result in the immediate future. I cannot help thinking, Sir, that if this Government had accepted this suggestion and had sent a commission out to ascertain all facts pertaining to the technical and industrial conditions of this province, the information thus obtained would have fitted in with and would have been supplemental to any information that the report of the Dominion Government commission may contain. The latter commission does well in ascertaining industrial and labor conditions here and elsewhere not only in this country but several other countries; but we, Sir, priding ourselves on being the banner province of the Dominion, might well have acted upon our own initiative, and as a result of concurrent work ascertained more minutely the requirements of this particular province. Then, Sir, we could have availed ourselves of the work of the Dominion commission and at the same time have had the question from an internal standpoint dealt more exhaustively with by our own commission. As an incidental advantage, the educational effect of a properly selected commission moving from town to town and city to city throughout the province would have been distinctly felt and would have done very much towards crystallizing the views of municipal officers, boards of trade, boards of education, and employers of labor on this extremely important question.

CONTRAST WITH GERMANY.

There is a marked difference between our educational system and

that of other countries which have given the question of industrial education serious consideration. Perhaps in this province, considering we are a young country, the school of culture has too much predominated. The marked distinction between our school system and that of Germany, for example, is that our continuation classes are still entirely scholastic, whereas Germany says to her children :

"I will give you an education sufficient for ordinary life up to the end of your common school course. After that you must begin to think of this as a practical world, and I, the state, will assist you in a practical way, so that you may earn an honest living."

The result is that continuation classes in Germany become continuation industrial schools. Of these there are some 2,200, attended by 350,000 pupils. After a two-year's course in these industrial schools the young man specializes and attends higher technical schools and institutes.

We believe it is the duty of the state to give the child of the state such education as may hereafter make him the best citizen of the state. It becomes a very grave and important question whether this province might not, whether this province ought not, to give such practical assistance as will enable the youth of the province the better and easier to make a livelihood. My contention is, Sir, that we ought to establish in every industrial centre an "evening industrial school" to supplement the work of the workshop. These schools ought to be of such a general character as to reach out to all the lads in the workshop, and ought not to be confined to those who are fortunate enough to reach a high school or collegiate institute status.

It is a matter of extreme regret that this Government has not taken more active steps, that it has not put itself in a position to take more active steps than it has done, and that the speech from the throne merely says :

"That the necessity is becoming more obvious day by day for a system of technical and industrial education."

PROVINCIAL AID FOR SCHOOLS.

Last year, Sir, I produced figures to show what the province is doing by way of aiding in the education of certain classes of people. I then made clear the fact that the provincial grants to public and separate schools amount annually to \$1.38 for each pupil attending the same; the grants to high schools and collegiate institutes to \$4.66 per pupil; the grants to normal and model schools amount to \$112.43 per pupil; the grants to Toronto University \$126.36 per pupil. It is difficult to figure exactly what the average grant to agricultural colleges per pupil is, although some substantial aid is given; but, Sir, when we come to a very deserving class, the industrial school class, a far different story is told. This province practically says to the lad from thirteen to seventeen years of age who is perforce driven from school to earn a livelihood in the workshop that it has no concern for him, that it has neither moral nor financial obligation with reference to him. Sir, last year we assisted 4,500 odd public and separate school pupils at the rate of \$1.38 per pupil; we assisted 3100 odd high school and collegiate institute pupils at the rate of \$4.66 per pupil; we assisted 438 normal and model school pupils at the rate of \$112.43 per capita, and we assisted 3,950 university students at a rate of \$126.00 per pupil. Thus does this province follow from stage to stage those who are financially able to attend our schools and colleges thus to attain a liberal education; but when it comes to the lad whom chill penury at an early age drives to the workshop, the province says to him, we are under no moral or financial responsibility with reference to you and will make no provision whatever for your further education. I say, Sir, that until some different scheme is properly worked out that will have due regard to the moral and financial responsibility of this province with reference to the industrial classes the educational system of this province will be but ill-balanced and the state will not be doing what it should do for the large number of young men and young

women we find in all our industrial centres.

THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROBLEM

Sir, I confess frankly that I have not as much confidence in the successful working out of this scheme as has, apparently, the framer of the speech from the throne. There has been already so much misconduct and mismanagement on the part of the commission as not to justify the highest hopes with reference to the future. Last year we criticized at length the inequitable and unfair way in which the commission obtained their easements. We have also heretofore dealt with the absolutely tyrannical legislation whereby the votes taken in fourteen municipalities upon one question were made to do service for an entirely different scheme. It will be recalled that by-laws were submitted in some fifteen municipalities in Western Ontario; the question then submitted to the ratepayer was, whether he was willing to pay a certain fixed figure for power delivered by the commission at the gate of his town or city. The ratepayer in that case was not called upon to make any inquiry as to the original cost, or as to the cost of transmission, but had only to decide the very simple question whether power delivered at the door of his municipality at a certain price was cheap power or not. That called for no investigation whatever upon the part of the ratepayers, and these by-laws were carried in some fifteen municipalities. Then, the Government entirely changed its scheme and instead of delivering, at a certain figure, power at the gates of the municipalities in question, it offered to sell power to the municipalities at Niagara at a certain price and to compel the municipalities to stand the cost of building and maintaining transmission lines, etc., let the cost be what it might. This was an entirely different scheme. Our view then was that when the Government and the commission entirely changed its scheme, the new scheme should have been submitted to the municipalities and the ratepayers given the opportunity of saying whether they voted yea or nay on this new scheme.

This the Government absolutely refused them, and the vote that was given for one proposition was taken as a test for an entirely different one, and legislation was passed as though they had voted and favored the present scheme. Our contention then was, and now is, that the people should have been trusted and the present scheme should have been submitted to the people of the municipalities for their approval or disapproval.

There is another phase of this question deserving serious consideration, as the matter is being at present worked out, the credit of the whole province is pledged for the benefit of a few municipalities in order that cheap power may be obtained for these municipalities. The absolute unfairness of this plan is better seen if we take specific illustrations of how it works out. For example, Bracebridge the other day held a banquet as a result of the successful opening of their power scheme. What did Bracebridge require to do? Bracebridge was required to submit its scheme to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board, a creature of the Government, and when their scheme had been approved of by the Municipal Board, Bracebridge was obliged to sell its own debentures. They sold at 98½, hearing, I think, 4½ per cent interest. Now, contrast this method of procedure towards obtaining cheap power as, let us say, between Bracebridge and Welland. The province as a whole, Bracebridge included, is compelled to furnish cheap money and cheap power for Welland, but in turn the province as a whole, including Welland, does not endorse Bracebridge, and does not assist Bracebridge in obtaining cheap power. The result is that Bracebridge loses \$1.50 per hundred on the sale of its debentures and pays 4½ per cent. interest, whereas Welland loses nothing on the sale and gets its money at about 3½ per cent.

There can be but one result of this whole scheme if successful; namely, that it will induce intending manufacturers to locate in the Niagara Peninsula rather than in the different towns and cities throughout the province. Nay, Sir, it may go so far as

to take away factories already existing in other towns and change them to near the Falls. I leave it with the Government to say whether as representing the whole province they think such a scheme is fair and equitable to the whole province. And this raises the further question whether a uniform flat rate would not be more equitable even within the electric zone.

REFORESTRATION.

I regret that I do not find any reference whatever to a very important subject, perhaps one of the largest questions which the Honorable, the Minister of Lands and Forests has to deal with, namely, that of reforestation. I think, Sir, the Government has been sufficiently long in power and the necessity of the conservation of our forests has been put so plainly, and so often, before the Government from this side of the House that the public might now expect a well-defined plan of forest conservation and of reforestation.

PEOPLING THE NORTHLAND.

The honorable member for South Norfolk spoke of the population of Ontario. In that connection, Sir, I desire to raise the question whether we are doing as a province all that might be done to obtain desirable immigrants; whether the province is at all doing its duty towards peopling our Northlands? Sir, we know what the result of a vigorous Dominion immigration policy has done for the West, and I think this Government might well take a leaf out of their book and show more initiative, zeal and energy as to the important question of obtaining settlers for the fertile agricultural lands of North Ontario. Sir, this Government in that respect ought to awaken out of its sleep, and ought at once to institute an active propaganda in favor of peopling our own Hinterland. We know something, Sir, of the rapid progress of the West, Calgary, for example, last year boasted a population of 30,000 or 35,000. This year she claims 51,000. Similarly Edmonton's population last year was about 20,000, now it is claimed that it is 30,000. The population of the agricul-

tural lands of that province is increasing in about the same proportion. This Government claims that we have as fertile lands in Northern Ontario as will be found in the West, why then, is not something practical and tangible being done towards securing population?

THAT THREE-FIFTHS CLAUSE.

I was rather amused with the ideas expressed by the honorable member for South Norfolk with reference to local option. He expressed the idea that a grand work had been accomplished for temperance within a certain time past, because of the fact that 242 municipalities had in that time adopted local option, that 596 hotel licenses had been cut off, and 16 shop licenses removed. This under the present law he said was a "splendid result." I would like to ask the honorable gentleman whether he is not falling into the logical fallacy of proving either too little or too much? If it was a splendid thing under the three-fifths clause to have cut off 596 licenses, would it not have been a much more splendid thing to have cut off seven or eight hundred under a majority vote? What says the honorable gentleman? He sits silent, while the ridiculousness and the absurdity of his argument is apparent even to himself. He pledges himself to stand where he has always stood, namely, for the three-fifths clause. We, Sir, on this side of the House that ever stood on safer ground. We have maintained that so long as the vote taken in any particular municipality has no bearing as to results outside of that municipality that it should be treated as an ordinary municipal vote, and that a majority should rule. Examine the present Act, and see what anomalous and ridiculous results it leads to. In a certain town you have two voters, John Smith and John Brown. John Smith is a local optionist, John Brown is an anti-local optionist. Prior to the submission for the first time of the local option measure, according to the present law John Brown's vote was worth one-and-a-half times John Smith's. The moment, however, local option is carried, notwithstanding that these same two men are living

and voting in the same town under similar conditions the situation is reversed, and John Smith's vote becomes worth one-and-a-half of John Brown's. A law that produces such results would do credit to a sleight-of-hand man, or Japanese juggler, but it is not at all creditable to a British Legislature. The only sound position to take, Mr. Speaker, is the one I stand upon, namely, "one man, one vote, and every vote of equal value."

We have, Sir, divided the House for five successive sessions upon this question, and we will continue to divide it until the true principle of legislation is recognized and adopted. I, Sir, have taken that position, and intend to continue taking that position regardless of who is hit. He would be a mean local optionist who would ask to have the dice loaded in his favor, and he would be just as mean a friend of the trade who would make such a request. I repeat, Sir, that the dice should not be loaded for or against either party. If a municipality desires to adopt local option, the voice of the majority should rule. If, after having had an experience of local option, that municipality desires to return to the license system in preference to local option, again the majority should rule. The people who live under a law for three years, day in and day out, know more about its workings than any Government sitting in Queen's Park, be that Government Liberal or Conservative. Trust the people, and allow the people to deal with the matter fairly.

EDUCATION.

In dealing with the Government's attitude with reference to industrial education I pointed out that this Government has practically done nothing along that line. Perhaps, Sir, it is well for industrial education that they should never take the subject up. If no more intelligent direction is given to the movement by the Education Department than it has shown in the dealing with rural school education, I repeat, it may be a blessing if this Government never touches the question at all. Of all the mismanagement that any department in the known world ever was guilty of, I venture

to say that that of the Education Department with reference to our rural schools is the most pronounced. Of all the floundering and blundering and sinning against advice ever known, I know nothing to equal that of this Government in the manner in which it has dealt with our rural schools. No Department, Sir, could possibly have been more mischievous as to results than the Education Department of this province. I make that statement deliberately, I make it plainly, with the full sense of the responsibility that the charge implies. When this Government, Sir, proposed to wipe out our model schools we, on this side of the House, gave them fair warning and told them plainly what any intelligent ten-year-old child ought to know, namely, that if they at one stroke wiped out the means of training qualified teachers for our public schools, there must inevitably be a dearth of qualified teachers. After first, Sir, they had determined to abolish the Model Schools, when we found our efforts to save them were unavailing, we next begged of the Premier of this Province, the Honorable the Minister of Education, not to wipe out the model schools at one stroke. We urged that there should at least be a survival of the fittest of them, in order that a supply of properly qualified teachers might be ensured for all our schools. This, Sir, was the burden of our plea. What I have said from session to session upon this subject is well known to honorable gentlemen in this House. They will also recall a plea along this line made by the Hon. Mr. Harcourt and the Hon. Mr. Graham; but, Sir, the Honorable, the Minister of Education, seems always absolutely impervious to knowledge. He seems, Sir, unsusceptible to receiving even a single idea along educational lines. Nothing could or would permeate his thinking faculty. Session after session we pointed out what must be the inevitable result of closing the model schools; we also pointed out what is a known fact, that at least, twenty, possibly thirty per cent. of our normal trained teachers do not remain in Ontario, but go to the western provinces where without any further training they are qualified to teach. The result is that

we have cut off largely the basis of supply of teachers for our rural schools, and are spending Ontario money to train teachers, a very large percentage of whom do not remain within the province. I repeat, Sir, this Government with reference to the rural schools of Ontario sinned against light, sinned against warning, and sinned against knowledge. No class of people in the whole province are more anxious to give the very best education they possibly can to their children than are the farmers of the Province of Ontario; but, Sir, there is a limit beyond which they cannot go. By closing the model schools this Government barred the door to many a poor man's son and daughter from ever entering the teaching profession. This fact is so well known that it needs but to be mentioned to be recognized as truth in every part of Ontario. I say, Sir, the result of the stupid, stubborn, and blundering policy of this Government was absolutely inevitable and was easily discernible in advance. It has led to a deplorable and lamentable state of affairs. We now find twenty per cent. or more of the rural schools in our land in the hands of teachers with absolutely no professional training whatever, and some of them without even a semblance of a non-professional certificate, and this, Sir, is a direct result of the stupidity and stubbornly adopted policy of this Government. As an illustration, Sir, I find in the Public School Report of William E. Tilley, Esquire, Public School Inspector for the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham that there were last year seventy rural school teachers in these united counties. Two having first-class certificates, twenty-seven with second-class, twenty-two thirds—mostly renewed, and not less than nineteen schools were being taught by people having no professional training—teaching simply on temporary permits. Now, Sir, contrast this with ten years ago: From the same report I learn that in the year 1900 there were exactly the same number of rural school teachers in these united counties, namely seventy. Of these, two had first-class certificates, twenty-two had second-class and the remain-

ing forty-six were professional thirds. There was not one single permit in either county in that year. Last year we had not less than nineteen!! That Sir, is a fair average of what we find all over the Province of Ontario, and this is the result of the policy deliberately adopted by this Government in spite of all warning we could possibly give them. In my own riding, Sir, in the early January of last year, there were no less than fifteen rural schools vacant, and the trustees and inspector were busy scurrying hither and thither in an endeavor to secure any person regardless of qualification, to act as a teacher. Complaints come from all over the province along the same lines. This scarcity of teachers is the natural consequence of the closing of the model schools. My argument years ago was, and now is, that it was far better to have teachers, some of whom may not have had the normal school professional training, than to adopt a system calling for a more expensive training and resulting in the fact that one-third of our schools are in the hands of untrained teachers. I may add, Sir, that I have always had great faith in the work of our model schools: they were in charge of competent and experienced men, men of five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years' actual experience, men who were trained in what is by all odds the best of all universities—the university of actual experience. They were doing efficient and successful work. These schools were easy of access to intending teachers. A poor man's son or daughter was not obliged to leave home and reside for a year in one of our cities to obtain professional training. Instead, however, Sir, of continuing these model schools until at least a sufficient number of teachers were guaranteed for the province, practically all the model schools in Old Ontario were closed, with the deplorable results already referred to. The net result is that the cost of education in the rural districts is increased fifty or seventy-five per cent., and on the average the character and quality of the teaching is far lower than it was ten years ago.

SUMMARY.

Now, Sir, I have dealt in a cursory way with the leading subjects which

are either mentioned in, or omitted from, the speech from the throne. I regret to say that I find in the speech no guarantee, nay, Sir, not even an indication of a forward movement as to the large question of reforestation, perhaps the largest the Government has to-day to deal with. I find no indication whatever of the adoption of an aggressive colonization policy looking to the peopling of our own northland. Nor do I find any indication of dealing comprehensively and systematically with that all-important question of industrial education, nor, Sir, do I find any indication of any intention on the part of the Government to take any steps whatever to relieve the serious condition of affairs in which the rural school sections find themselves with reference to teachers. I, for one, Sir, strongly urge upon the Government, in order to supply a sufficient number of teachers, to reinstate, in the meantime, at least, the model schools of the province in order that duly qualified teachers may be furnished for the rural schools. I stand, Mr. Speaker, where I have always stood on the "three-fifths clause" as to local option. Much credit has been claimed for the Honourable, the Provincial Secretary, by the honorable member for South Norfolk with reference to the enforcement of the liquor license law, and he even had the temerity to refer to the enforcement of the law in New Ontario! Doubtless he had in his mind the fiasco of sending Yankee Pinkerton detectives up into that north country, who collected a considerable quantity of liquor, then illegally sold the same, and then prosecuted the purchasers for re-selling! This hollow humbug of pretending to put down the illicit sale of liquor in the north country is becoming a scandal. Every man knows that if one good Canadian official stood on each train of the Government road, by which road alone liquor can be brought in to that north country, he could absolutely stop the traffic; but instead, Sir, the liquor is allowed to go in, and then the province is put to the expense of sending a gang of disreputable detectives up to make a farce of the administration of justice.

Again, Sir, we are told, and the

boast is made by Government supporters ad nauseam, that the Attorney-General's Department is, and has been extremely active, because of the isolated fact that years ago they put out of existence a single poolroom. I make the statement boldly, I make it with a full responsibility of the gravity of its nature, when I say that there never was a time in the history of the province when the people of the province had so little faith in the activity, or rather inactivity, of the Attorney-General's Department as now. Never, Sir, since Confederation have there been so many absolute miscarriages of justice, and never have so many scoundrels gone unwhipped of justice as during the past five years. I do not purpose entering into details, they are familiar to the public—the Orangeville affair, the Kinrade inquiry, and others, furnish striking illustrations. The Department seems to be absolutely overcome with inertia. How well, Sir, we all recall the boast of the Honourable, the Provincial Treasurer, during the session of 1906, that this Government had actually raised the standard of the administration of justice. "The King's writ now runs throughout the Province," shouted this distinguished gentleman. Sir, the general public are strongly of the opinion that it is the other fellows that are allowed to do the running, while the King's writ, under the direction of the Attorney-General's Department, lags lamely on the stage of action. And yet, Sir, the mover and the seconder shout "Behold this great Government." The honorable member for South Norfolk went so far in his adulation as to say "there never was a government like ours in the world." Sir, let me assure him that for once I unreservedly accept his statement. Unfortunately for this province his statement is entirely too true.

Now, Sir, pursuing the course adopted last year, this debate has been somewhat curtailed. The house will not now be divided, but later during the session, on all these and other issues, honorable gentlemen of this House will have not only an opportunity for discussion, but of sitting and taking notice while the Division Bell rings.

